

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
June 26, 2025
6:00 p.m. - Pulaski County Innovation Center, Fairlawn

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT: Mr. H. **Johnson**, Town of Christiansburg, Chair; Mr. L. **Law**, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. A. **Covey**, New River Community College, Vice-Chair; Ms. S. **Anderson**, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. A. **Chambers**, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. L. **Clevinger**, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. **Davis**, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. B. **Dawson**, Town of Pulaski; Mr. A. **Grafsky**, Montgomery County; Ms. T. **Hockett**, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. B. **Jaunarena**, Pulaski County; Ms. L. **DeVito Kuchenbuch**, Floyd County; Mr. M. **Maslaney**, Floyd County; Mr. W. **Seagle**, Town of Dublin; Mr. K. **Smith**, Virginia Tech Foundation, and Mr. T. **Spangler**, Town of Narrows.

ABSENT: Mr. W. **Griffin**, Town of Floyd; Mr. D. **Horton**, City of Radford; Dr. A. **Joyner**, Radford University; Mr. R. **Lawson**, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. **McCoy**, Giles County; Mr. J. **Martin**, City of Radford; Mr. P. **Martin**, Giles County; Ms. L. **Morris**, Virginia Tech; Mr. J. **Reeves**, Pulaski County; Mx. E. **Shawish**, Town of Blacksburg, and Mr. B. **Wheeler**, Montgomery County.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd and Julie Phillips

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for May

Mr. Johnson called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for May

Mr. Johnson called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Law moved for approval of the Treasurer's Reports. Mr. Maslaney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried

III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None

B. Regular Project Review

1. USEPA'S community-wide brown fields assessment grant for the Town of Pulaski

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson recognized Ms. Covey for her service to the board from 2018 until 2025. She was the first representative from New River Community College, served on the Executive Committee, and most recently served as Vice-Chair. She was then presented with a plaque.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The US Economic Development Administration recently released a Notice of Funding Opportunity for a Hurricane Helene Disaster Supplemental. The program has \$1.4B in funding with three program tracks: Readiness, Implementation, and Industry Transformation. A briefing call was held on 6/16 with the Virginia Economic Development Representative to discuss the program in more detail. Several projects in the region could align well with the program, so there may be multiple applications to address infrastructure in the Readiness and Implementation tracks while the AM2 Tech Hub may have a project fit the Industry Transformation category. Staff is coordinating a call with local government economic developers to ensure they are aware of the grant opportunity and to discuss projects.

The NRV Recovery Ecosystem submitted the FY26 proposal to the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) at the beginning of April and anticipate a slight reduction from the requested funding level. Local governments and agencies are identifying ways to decrease the budget without impacting personnel and on-going programs.

The federal BEAD program recently released a policy change from prioritizing funding for end-to-end fiber in favor of "technology neutral" that allows all qualified technologies to compete for "priority" status. For the user, this policy change has implications for lower upload speeds. Fiber can allow for symmetrical service whereas other technologies such as fixed wireless and satellite can accomplish strong download speeds, but often have limited upload capacity.

Floyd County recently celebrated the completion of its Scattered Site Housing Redevelopment round one project. Round two is anticipated to get underway soon and the project already has enough applications to fill the allotted funding.

The Regional Commission continues to support communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. Funds currently available include Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for Urgent Needs; GO Virginia recently opened a special Hurricane Helene Business Recovery program; CDBG for Disaster Recovery will be available for applications soon; 2025 General Assembly appropriation for Hurricane Helene/Winter Storm 2025 is partially open for housing projects with mitigation projects becoming available in July; as referenced above, EDA announced a \$1.4B grant program to address Hurricane Helene impacts.

Congratulations to the City of Radford selecting their next city manager. Todd Meredith, Pearisburg's Town Manager, will begin as city manager on July 21st. Craig Meadows, retired Montgomery County Administrator, served as the interim city manager the past six months.

The Regional Commission is bidding a fond farewell to Julie Fox, Education and Training Coordinator, with the NRV Recovery Ecosystem later this month. Julie recently accepted a position with Montgomery County Public Schools. She did a remarkable job engaging all five school systems and quickly rolled out training opportunities that helped educators and students learn about substance use disorder. The Regional Commission will look to fill this position soon while building on the foundation Julie established.

VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Spangler reported that the Town of Narrows received a grant to support Mill Creek improvements and a Community Development Block Grant for sewer improvements.

Mr. Graftsky reported Teel Park in Riner held a soft opening with an official opening planned for the fall. Construction of the VATI 2021 project in Shawsville and Elliston is now largely complete with the focus shifting to individual end-user connections.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported Floyd County completed the first phase of their scattered site housing project. They will hold their 4th of July celebrations on July 5th hosted by Floyd County Parks and Recreation at Floyd County High School.

Mr. Smith reported Virginia Tech is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Corporate Research Center (CRC) and beginning the process of updating the CRC Master Plan.

Ms. Hockett reported the Town of Christiansburg will hold 4th of July events on July 4th in downtown and at Huckleberry Park.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Regional Economic Strategy – FY25 Update for US EDA

Mr. Byrd explained each year the New River Valley Regional Commission reviews and updates the region's Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The purpose of the RES is to continue federal and local partnerships to address economic development in the region. The RES also documents planning efforts to identify economic development needs in the region which serves as the foundation of the strategy document.

Motion: Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch moved to approve the Regional Economic Strategy FY25 Update. Ms. Covey seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Proposed Budget for FY26

Mr. Byrd explained the proposed budget was included in the agenda packet and provided additional details on both the budgeted expenditures and the anticipated revenue.

Motion: Mr. Law moved to approve the FY26 budget. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Officers for FY26

Mr. Johnson shared the slate presented by the nominating committee.

The nominations include:

Chair: Hil Johnson, Town of Christiansburg

Vice-Chair: Susan Anderson, Town of Blacksburg

Treasurer: Leon Law, Giles County

At-Large: David Horton, City of Radford

At-Large: Linda DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County

At-Large: Larry Clevinger, Town of Pulaski

Past Chair: Mike Maslaney, Floyd County

Mr. Spangler moved to elect the slate of officers as presented. Mr. Graftsky seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission